

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022*

## **Remarks on the Shooting in Uvalde, Texas**

*May 24, 2022*

Good evening, my fellow Americans.

I had hoped, when I became President, I would not have to do this again. Another massacre. Uvalde, Texas. An elementary school. Beautiful, innocent second, third, and fourth graders. And how many scores of little children who witnessed what happened, see their friends die as if they're on a battlefield, for God's sake. They'll live with it the rest of their lives.

There's a lot we don't know yet, but there's a lot we do know. Their parents, who will never see their child again, never have them jump in bed and cuddle with them. Parents who will never be the same.

To lose a child is like having a piece of your soul ripped away. There's a hollowness in your chest; you feel like you're being sucked into it and never going to be able to get out. It's suffocating. And it's never quite the same.

And it's a feeling shared by the siblings and the grandparents and the family members and the community that's left behind.

Scripture says—Jill and I have talked about this in different contexts, in other contexts: "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." So many crushed spirits. So tonight I ask the Nation to pray for them, to give the parents and siblings the strength in the darkness they feel right now.

As a nation, we have to ask: When in God's name are we going to stand up to the gun lobby? When in God's name will we do what we all know in our gut needs to be done?

It's been 340—3,448 days—10 years since I stood up at a high school in Connecticut—a grade school in Connecticut, where another gunman massacred 26 people, including 20 first graders, at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Since then, there have been over 900 incidents of gunfires reported on school grounds.

Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Santa Fe High School in Texas. Oxford High School in Michigan. The list goes on and on. And the list grows when it includes mass shootings at places like movie theaters, houses of worship, and, as we saw just 10 days ago, at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York.

I am sick and tired of it. We have to act. And don't tell me we can't have an impact on this carnage.

I spent my career as a Senator and a—as a Vice President working to pass commonsense gun laws. We can't and won't prevent every tragedy. But we know they work and have positive impact. When we passed the assault weapons ban, mass shootings went down. When the law expired, mass shootings tripled.

The idea that an 18-year-old kid can walk into a gun store and buy two assault weapons is just wrong. What in God's name do you need an assault weapon for except to kill someone? Deer aren't running through the forest with Kevlar vests on, for God's sake. It's just sick.

And the gun manufacturers have spent two decades aggressively marketing assault weapons, which make them the most and largest profit. For God's sake, we have to have the courage to stand up to the industry.

Here's what else I know: Most Americans support commonsense laws—commonsense gun laws.

I just got off my trip from Asia, meeting with Asian leaders, and I learned of this while I was on the aircraft. And what struck me on that 17-hour flight—what struck me was, these kinds of mass shootings rarely happen anywhere else in the world. Why? They have mental health problems. They have domestic disputes in other countries. They have people who are lost. But these kinds of mass shootings never happen with the kind of frequency they happen in America. Why?

Why are we willing to live with this carnage? Why do we keep letting this happen? Where in God's name is our backbone to have the courage to deal with it and stand up to the lobbies? It's time to turn this pain into action. For every parent, for every citizen in this country, we have to make it clear to every elected official in this country: It's time to act.

It's time for those who obstruct or delay or block the commonsense gun laws—we need to let you know that we will not forget. We can do so much more. We have to do more.

Our prayer tonight is for those parents, lying in bed and trying to figure out: "Will I be able to sleep again? What do I say to my other children? What happens tomorrow?"

May God bless the loss of innocent life on this sad day. And may the Lord be near the brokenhearted and save those crushed in spirit, because they're going to need a lot of help and a lot of our prayers.

God love you.

*Q.* Sir, what will you ask Congress to do now?

*Q.* Will you consider the shooting today an act of domestic terrorism?

*Q.* Will you go to Texas? Sir, will you go to Texas?

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:41 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Salvador Rolando Ramos, suspected gunman in the shooting at Robb Elementary School, who was killed by law enforcement officers.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Shooting in Uvalde, TX.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Biden, Jill T.; Ramos, Salvador Rolando.

*Subjects:* Connecticut : 2012 shooting in Newtown; Florida : 2018 shooting in Parkland; Law enforcement and crime : Gun control; Law enforcement and crime : Gun violence, prevention efforts; Michigan : 2021 shooting in Oxford; New York : Buffalo :: Shooting; Texas : 2018 shooting in Santa Fe; Texas : Uvalde :: Shooting.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD202200452.